

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
BUREAU OF RAIL AND TRANSIT**

CONFERENCE REPORT

DATE OF MEETING: May 21, 2014

LOCATION OF MEETING: NHDOT, 5 Hazen Drive, Concord NH Room 205

SUBJECT: Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee (BPTAC)

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Nik Coates (Chair)
Jeff Latimer, Gus' Bike Shop
Eric Feldbaum, DRED
Scott Bogle (by phone)
Tim Blagden, Bike-Walk Alliance of NH
Felice Janelle, NHDES Air Resources
Erik Paddleford, NHDOT Rail and Transit
Mark Samsel, NH Rail Trail Coalition (Vice Chair) (by phone)
Rick Taintor, Portsmouth Planning Department (by phone)
Craig Tufts, Central NH Planning Commission

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS/ OTHERS PRESENT:

Mary Poesse, North Country Council
Tom Chapman, US Fish and Wildlife (by phone)
Larry Keniston, NHDOT Rail and Transit
Chuck Redfern, Pathways for Keene, Keene Bike/ Ped Committee
Jim Kirouac, NHDOT Highway Design
Steve Waleryszak, SWRPC (by phone)
Matt Waitkins, Nashua Planning Commission (by phone)

NOTES ON MEETING:

The regular meeting of the BPTAC was called to order on May 14, at 10 a.m. by the Chair.

Approval of April Minutes

Minutes of the April meeting were approved.

Project updates

Design and Maintenance Document

The sub-committee members have spent time looking at other states and organizations for similar documents to use as a template for NH. The group found Virginia to have a good document and have contacted the principals responsible for the document. The Virginia document is designed around bicycling only, and NH's version will include walking as a focus also. The goal would be to come up with a 20-30 page document that would provide advocates and municipal and DOT personnel a guidance document for the design and maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the State. A shorter, more concise version would also be created to work as a handout to provide people with a quick reference guide. A draft is anticipated to be available in approximately 6 months for review.

Relevant NH based photos are needed for the project and should be forwarded to Larry Keniston at lkeniston@dot.state.nh.us. Pictures should show innovative and useful bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities in New Hampshire with the location identified.

The sub-committee continues to meet bi-weekly.

Conference

Felice gave an update on the Conference. The NH Bicycle and Pedestrian Conference is scheduled for Wednesday, September 24th at the Holiday Inn in Concord. Panel discussions are planned for the morning, one on complete streets and another on a yet to be named topic. The afternoon will consist of breakout sessions. Several organizations will have display tables set up. Craig Della Penna, Executive Director Northeast Greenway Solutions Consulting firm, will be the keynote speaker.

Stress Mapping

Craig Tufts went over the stress-mapping project. Project aims to map NH cities using Level of Traffic Stress, which is based on a Dutch Model that measures the "stress level" of a cyclist on a particular roadway. There are 4 levels of traffic stress; 1 - child would feel comfortable, 2 - most adults comfortable, 3- a typical bicycle commuter would use the road, 4 - fearless cyclist. A meeting took place on May 12 to discuss the project. Currently, the pilot project cities of Manchester, Nashua, Keene, Concord and Portsmouth will need to send data to Tim Harmon of NHDOT. The data needs to be provided in a consistent format so Tim will be able to process the data. Tim will send a GIS layer with dropdown menus in the attribute table for the cities to fill in. The dropdowns are a way to make data input consistent across cities.

Bicycle/ Ped Counting

Craig Tufts gave an overview. Currently, the sub-committee is developing the statewide counting program. Some manual counts were conducted in May using volunteers in Concord, Manchester,

and a couple of other areas. Research is ongoing on automatic counters from different companies. The group has demo'd the Eco-Counter Pyro box that counts the raw number of users (it cannot distinguish between bicyclists or pedestrians). Other types of counters will be needed depending on the situation and what you want to measure. The Pyro Box unit costs roughly \$2,200. The information is transferred from the unit to a laptop via Bluetooth connection, then is uploaded to the Eco-Visio website and data stored in the "cloud".

Craig went over the data that was collected in Manchester from April 17th to May 6th on the Piscataquog trail and showed the data collected by various times and graphs. It is also possible to have the unit link to weather conditions to see how that affects the counts. Also looked at weekday and weekend counts and different time periods within those days.

Craig noted that in addition to mobile counting units it may be good to have permanent counters at a couple of strategic locations around the state.

Balanced Scorecard

The goal is to draft a letter from BPTAC to the NHDOT Balanced Scorecard Committee. The letter will address the shortcomings of the current Balanced Scorecard when it comes to bicycle and pedestrian performance measures and offer suggestions for potential goals and measures that could be used in the next edition. The letter will also ask for a meeting with the balanced scorecard committee and ask be included in discussions as the process to develop the next edition of the balanced scorecard moves forward. Erik will draft a letter for the next meeting.

Strava Data

NHDOT planning personnel have been asked to look at the data provided by Strava to determine the best way to receive the data. Oregon opted to have their data delivered on Open Street Map. It probably makes the most sense to have the data on the DOT roads layer, but we would need to make sure the rail trails, and potentially other trails are included in the roads layer so we do not miss any of the Strava data.

Mapping

SWRPC would provide a leadership role with the project. So far, there has not been a consensus on how each RPC would fund the project. Essentially, the level of effort for each RPC would be approximately \$4,200 and there are 2 options for funding the project:

1. Participate and use existing UPWP funds
2. Interested but no funds, then amend UPWP for additional funds through governor and council process

A letter will be written to the RPC directors explaining the funding options for the project and asking about participation from each of the RPCs.

Outreach and Marketing

Outreach and marketing committee – Alta planning, planning design and engineering firm has a subgroup focusing on marketing and outreach of bicycling and pedestrian activities. Jessica Roberts from Alta planning will do a question and answer session at the next meeting.

The marketing and outreach committee met and discussed the project scope and would like to have the project “shovel ready” when funding becomes available.

Plan and Impact Study

To determine the scope of economic impact study, it would be good to talk to Alta planning during the next meeting. It would be good to have an engineering firm in place for July 1 2015. The North Carolina Bike/ Ped Plan contained an economic impact study that was a piece of the overall plan. This may be the approach that is used in NH’s next statewide bike and ped plan.

Scott Bogle indicated that RSG (an engineering firm) has done an economic impact study for Vtrans and will find out what was done and how much it cost.

It may also be possible to add a question about bicycling and walking to the Division of Travel and Tourism’s longitudinal visitor survey.

Responses to DOT Actions

Claremont - Sugar River Trail

ATV’s are using the Sugar River Trail in Claremont. The trail was constructed with funds from various sources including: TE, RTP, and Private funds. When an ATV group applied for funding through DRED, this caused a red flag to go up since ATVs are not allowed on the portion of trail constructed with TE funds. The group has been told by the city that they are not allowed on the trail. The ATV group has asked for a waiver in order to be allowed on the trail. The waiver goes to the Federal DOT, but input on the decision is requested from the local FHWA office and the State DOT.

Committee members discussed possible ways the committee should address the issue and ways BPTAC could provide input to the Commissioner. The concern from BPTAC members is the precedence this might set if the waiver is granted. Would this mean that similar groups may request access on trails constructed with TE funding for non-motorized transportation only and be granted access?

It was the view of the committee that a TE policy statement would be the best approach instead of specifically addressing this specific waiver request for the Sugar River Trail.

Felice will draft a letter for the next BPTAC meeting.

Advocacy update

At the state level, HB 1135 passed, which increased penalties for driving without license.

Vulnerable user legislation will not pass this session. Have to go back again and address the concerns that were raised about the bill.

The Safe Streets Act letter will be edited further and sent to the NHDOT Commissioner.

Nik has been participating in the NH municipal association policy development process. A complete street policy is included in the current policy. The policy guides their lobbyists on what they should be doing as an organization, still needs to go through policy congress to get adopted, but having a complete street policy in there at this stage of the process is very promising.

Around the Horn

Scott Bogle noted that bike to work day on the Seacoast was a success with 493 people showing up across the 13 breakfasts in the area. On the day, there were 550 avoided auto trips.

Chuck Redfern indicated that as a result of the previous BPTAC meeting and conversation about using \$5 from vehicle registrations to pay for bike and ped improvements. He will be providing public testimony on the subject for the City of Keene.

Steve Waleryszak discussed the plans for purchasing approximately 20 bike racks to be placed throughout the City of Keene. There has been local support from businesses that will also donate funds and have bike racks installed in front of their businesses.

Mary Poesse indicated that the Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust feasibility study looking at a trail from Moose Brook State Park in Gorham to the Cooley-Jericho Community Forest that crosses town boundaries in Easton and could potentially connect further to Pittsburg is being conducted. Part of the idea is to promote hospitality in the region, tie in bed and breakfasts and restaurants, etc...

Tim Blagden had a meeting with the Pierce Manse board of trustees in Concord about the potential Concord to Lake Sunapee Rail Trail. The Pierce Manse would be at the head of the rail trail in Concord. Tim was at a public meeting on the Warner roundabout project in order to ensure the roundabout would accommodate traffic that would be coming from the proposed rail trail in Warner.

Craig Tufts indicated that 400+ bikes were sold over the 2 days at the Concord bike swap. Money goes to the Central NH Bike Coalition. CNHBC used money raised from the swap to help with construction costs of a new bike lane that will run 5 miles (both directions) from Concord to Penacook. The project will use thermoplastic for markings which are much more durable and will not need repainting every year.

Felice noted she is on the Transportation and Air Quality Committee working on the report to the 38th Conference of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers. The committee has discussed bicycle and pedestrian performance measures.

Rick Taintor indicated that the city of Portsmouth is working on their bicycle and pedestrian master plan, Toole design group is the consultant on the project and the next public meeting is scheduled for June 5th. There are three projects currently in the design phase involving bike lanes. They are about to put in their first bike corral near a downtown parking space. The City is also thinking about the Hampton Branch rail trail construction, if it is purchased by the state. Construction could begin next year.

Nik mentioned that he now has walkability and bikeability assessment booklets for advocates and communities to use. The booklet was finalized in May.

Next meeting: June 18, 2014, 1 pm – 3 pm